

Message Text

SECRET

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 160772

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS:PFOR LE, US

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM PRESIDENT FRANGIE

REFERENCE: STATE 158958; BEIRUT 8532

1. WHILE WE ARE GRATIFIED OVER DIB'S POSITIVE REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, WE CONTINUE TO WANT TO KEEP MESSAGE CONFIDENTIAL AS A WHOLE. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO US FOR GENERAL PURPOSE OF PRESERVING CONFIDENTIALITY OF EXCHANGES BETWEEN PRESIDENTS AS WELL AS FOR PURPOSE OF AVOIDING COMPARISON WITH BREZHNEV'S MESSAGE. SOVIETS' DESIRE TO HAVE BREZHNEV'S MESSAGE RELEASED IS UNDERSTANDABLE, SINCE THEIR MESSAGE WAS OPENLY CRITICAL OF ISRAEL AND WAS OBVIOUSLY DRAFTED WITH AN EYE TO MAKING PROPAGANDA DISPLAY IN LEBANON. PUBLICATION OF PRESIDENT'S REPLY WHICH REFLECTS US NEED TO PRESERVE ITS UNIQUE POSITION AS MEDIATOR, AND PUBLIC COMPARISON WITH BREZHNEV'S PROPAGANDA MESSAGE COULD COST US MORE THAN WE WOULD GAIN. WE PREFER TO BE IN A POSITION OF SAYING WE SUPPORT LEBANON'S INTEGRITY IN RESPONSIBLE WAY BUT DO NOT WISH TO ENGAGE IN A PROPAGANDA EXCHANGE OVER IT.

2. UNLESS IN YOUR FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH DIB PERSUASIVE

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REASON FOR PUBLICATION EMERGES, YOU SHOULD CONTINUE TO SAY

WE VIEW PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE AS PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATION,
THAT WE FEEL WE MUST PRESERVE CONFIDENTIALITY AS MATTER OF
GENERAL PRINCIPLE, AND WOULD NOT WANT FULL TEXT PUBLISHED.
WE WOULD, HOWEVER, HAVE NO OBJECTION TO GOL'S
DISCREETLY DISSEMINATING PRESIDENT'S ASSURANCES OF
CONTINUING U.S. SUPPORT FOR LEBANON'S TERRITORIAL
INTEGRITY AND OUR LONGSTANDING FRIENDSHIP FOR LEBANON
WITHOUT DIRECT QUOTATION. YOU CAN EXPLAIN TO DIB WE FEEL
WE ARE IN MORE RESPONSIBLE POSITION IF WE HANDLE OUR
CORRESPONDENCE THIS WAY. KISSINGER

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